



## **BUSH ENVIRONMENTAL ROLL-BACKS AND FLIP-FLOPS**

### **Arsenic**

Last week, the Bush Administration put millions of American lives at risk in order to repay a political debt. The Administration announced a roll-back of new rules that reduce the amount of arsenic allowed in America's drinking water. Arsenic is a poison - plain and simple. Studies show it causes several forms of cancer (including skin, bladder, lung and prostate) not to mention numerous other permanent health problems like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Children are most at risk. At least 11 million Americans, in small towns and big cities, have drinking water with dangerously high levels of Arsenic. According to the World Health Organization and the EU, the reasonable standard for arsenic in drinking water is 10 parts per billion (ppb).

However, the current standard in America, 50 parts per billion, dates back to 1942. For decades efforts have been made to tighten the arsenic standard. Finally, under the leadership of President Clinton, it happened. But now, under pressure from special-interests and big-time campaign contributors, the Bush Administration has revoked the new arsenic rule – in effect restoring the 50ppb standard. Special-interests pressured the Bush Administration to yank the new arsenic rule and it worked. As Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) puts it: "This is another example of special interest payback to industries that gave millions of dollars in campaign contributions."

### **Carbon Dioxide**

In his campaign for president, George W. Bush voiced concern about global warming and declared his support for mandatory reductions of four primary air pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, mercury, and carbon dioxide. Bush stated this campaign position in a key speech and it was enumerated in a campaign policy document issued last September. But now, under pressure from special-interest energy producers and their key supporters in Congress, Bush has broken that campaign promise. The President says he no longer supports mandatory curbs on carbon dioxide emissions from powerplants even though scientists agree carbon dioxide is the primary contributor to global warming.

UPDATE  
Arsenic



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This Bush flip-flop puts special interests before science and represents a cave-in to big contributors to the Republican party. Specifically, the Bush flip-flop rewards power plant operators and some utilities - big business interests that contributed heavily to the Bush campaign.

### **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**

President Bush wants to open the Arctic Refuge, the last pristine section of the Alaska coastal plain, to drilling for oil. He says it's a good way to address America's pending energy crisis. But scientists, environmentalists, and most Americans disagree. The reality is no oil or gas would flow from the Arctic Refuge for at least 10 years and even then the amount would be minimal. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates the volume of recoverable oil would amount to less than a six-month supply for America. In the meantime, hundreds of species of wildlife would be put at risk by these drilling operations.

Last week, even House Budget Committee Republicans acknowledged drilling in the Arctic Refuge isn't the answer to our energy problems when they wisely removed projected Arctic drilling revenues from their budget plan. Still, President Bush persists in advocating drilling and it's clear why. Bush has lots of special-interest Big Oil friends.

### **Hard-Rock Mining**

The Bush Administration recently revoked new rules governing hard-rock mining and announced a 45-day review period. It's another sign the President is more worried about rewarding Big Business than protecting the environment. Never mind that four years of tireless work went into formulating these rules governing what mining companies can and can't do on public property. The result, after a great deal of public comment, was a set of fair rules designed to allow mining to continue, but also that protects the environment and human health.

Key to these rules was a provision requiring even small mining companies to post a clean-up bond and take responsibility for clean-up and land restoration once a mine closes. The EPA estimates 40% of the headwaters of all western watersheds are polluted by mining waste and taxpayers could be on the hook for about \$1 billion in clean-up costs. But Bush's mining buddies see the rules as a burden, so they asked the President to stop them. And he complied. That's because the President and his party owe the mining industry big-time.

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# UPDATE Issue

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## Roadless

Here's an environmental protection Bush hasn't yet reversed, but is expected to in the same way as the other roll-backs. In the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, President Clinton used his authority to protect 58 million acres of America's prized forests from future logging, mining and road building. It was a heroic act designed to preserve America's wild beauty for the enjoyment of future generations. But the Bush Administration is poised to reverse this legacy because it interferes with the plans of the special interests. The logging, mining, and oil and gas industries along with some Western states are all fighting the Clinton road-building ban through the courts and in direct lobbying efforts.

In an early sign of his lack of support for these rules, President Bush has delayed them from taking effect for two months to May 12<sup>th</sup> while he considers what to do. According to press accounts, Bush is likely to try to overturn the rules to keep his contributors happy. In the meantime, a court hearing for one of the lawsuits is scheduled for this Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, in Boise, Idaho. The road-ban rules were two years in the making, not a last-minute regulation as Republicans and special-interests would have you believe. In fact, the government received 1.6 million public comments and held 600 public hearings on the proposed rules.

## What's Next?

And the rollbacks continue. Now the word is lead emissions rules may be next on the Bush hit-list. More than 60 industry trade associations have written to the EPA demanding the repeal of new rules requiring polluters to report their lead emissions. This most severely affects America's children, who are the most vulnerable population when it comes to lead pollution. Once again, these rules were formulated with public input and industry input. Now special-interests are again hoping to cash in on their contributions to the new President.